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AN
(Renan, E.)
Renan

MY SISTER HENRIETTA.

Henriette Roman.
from a photograph

ERNEST RENAN.

MY SISTER HENRIETTA.

With Photogravure Illustrations

FROM PAINTINGS BY

HENRI SCHEFFER AND ARY RENAN.

TRANSLATED BY

ABBY L. ALGER.

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1895.

CENTRAL COLLECTION

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PREFACE.

THIS little work is an exact reproduction of a pamphlet, one hundred copies of which were printed by Ernest Renan, in September, 1862, under the following title: "Henrietta Renan; a Memory for those who knew her." On the first page we find this phrase: "These pages were not intended, and will not be offered, for publication."

In 1833, in the Preface to his "Memories of Childhood and Youth," Ernest Renan wrote: —

"The person who exerted the strongest influence upon my life, I mean my sister

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Henrietta, occupies hardly any space in this book. In September, 1862, one year after the death of that precious friend, I wrote, for the few people who knew her, a tiny volume sacred to her memory. Only one hundred copies were printed. My sister was so modest, she had such an aversion to publicity, that I should have felt that she reproached me from her tomb, had I given those pages to the world. I have sometimes thought of adding them to this book. But then I considered that it would be a sort of profanation. The little pamphlet about my sister was read with sympathy by a few people, moved by a kindly feeling for her and for me. It would be wrong for me to expose a memory which is sacred to me to the arrogant criticism which all who buy a book are at liberty to utter. It seemed to me that to insert these pages about my sister in a volume offered for sale would be as base as to expose her portrait in an auction

room. The pamphlet therefore will not be reprinted until after my death. Some of my dear one's letters may then be added to it, the selection to be made by me during my life."

In a codicil to his will, dated Nov. 4, 1888, Ernest Renan authorized the present reprint, saying: "My wife will arrange for the publication of my little volume of reminiscences of my sister Henrietta, as may seem best to her." In fact, the present reprint was prepared by Madame Cornélia Renan. The selection of letters written by Henrietta Renan was never made by her brother. The number of these letters prevents their insertion in this publication, and they will form a volume by themselves later on.

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MY SISTER HENRIETTA.

THE memory of men is but an imperceptible trace of the furrow which each of us leaves upon the bosom of infinity. And yet it is no vain thing. The consciousness of humanity is the highest reflective image that we know of the total consciousness of the universe. The esteem of a single individual is a part of the absolute Justice. Therefore, although noble lives need no other memory than that of God, there has in all ages been an effort to make their

image permanent. I should be the more guilty did I fail to render this duty to my sister Henrietta, since I alone knew the treasures of that elect soul. Her timidity, her reserve, her fixed opinion that a woman should live in retirement, cast over her rare qualities a veil which very few were permitted to lift. But those who belonged to the select few to whom she showed herself as she really was, would blame me if I did not strive to bring together all which may complete their memories.

I.

My sister Henrietta was born at Tréguier, on July 22, 1811. Her life was early saddened and filled

House in which Ernest Renan was born at Tréguier

with stern duties. She never knew other joys than those bestowed by virtue and affection. She inherited from our father a melancholy disposition, which left her little taste for commonplace amusements, and even inspired her with a certain disposition to shun the world and its pleasures. She had nothing of the lively, gay, and sprightly nature which my mother retained even in her beautiful and vigorous old age. Her religious sentiments, at first restricted to the doctrines of Catholicism, were always very profound. Tréguier, the little town where we were born, is an ancient episcopal city, rich in poetic impressions. It was once one of those grand monastic towns, after the Welsh and Irish fashion, founded by Breton

emigrants of the sixth century. Its father was an abbot named Tual or Tugdual. When Noménoé, in the ninth century, wishing to establish a Breton nationality, changed all those great monasteries in the north into bishopries, Pabu-Tual, or the monastery of Saint Tual, was one of them. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Tréguier became an ecclesiastic centre of considerable importance, and the common resort of the local gentry. During the Revolution the bishopric was suppressed; but after the restoration of the Catholic faith, the vast edifices owned by the city again made it an ecclesiastical centre, a city of convents and religious establishments. There was but little private life. The streets,

Spire of Treguier Cathedral.

save one or two, are long solitary passages, made by high convent walls or by ancient canonical houses surrounded by gardens. A general air of distinction pervades the place, and gives that poor dead city a charm unknown to the richer, more active towns of tradesmen, that have grown up in other parts of the country.

The cathedral particularly, a very fine sixteenth century structure, with its lofty naves, its amazing architectural liberties, its surprisingly slender spire, and its old Romanesque tower, a relic of an older edifice, seems expressly formed to nourish lofty thoughts. At night, it was open until a very late hour for the prayers of pious persons, lighted by a single

lamp, pervaded by that moist warm atmosphere kept up in antique buildings, the vast empty interior was full of the infinite and of vague terrors. The suburbs of the city are rich in beautiful or strange legends. Some quarter of a mile away is the chapel built near the birthplace of the good councillor Saint Yves, the Breton saint of latter days, who in popular belief has become the defender of the feeble, the great redresser of wrongs; close by, on a very high point, the old church of St. Michael, destroyed by lightning. There we were taken every year on the Thursday before Easter. There is a theory that upon that day all the bells, during the long period of silence to which they are

condemned, go to Rome to beg the Pope's blessing. To see them pass by, we climbed a ruin-crowned hill; we shut our eyes and we saw them traverse the air, bending slightly towards the earth, their lace robes floating softly behind them, — the same robes which they wore on the day of their christening. A little farther on rises the little chapel of the Five Wounds, in a charming valley; on the other side of the river, near an ancient holy well, is Nôtre Dame du Tromeur, a spot greatly venerated by pilgrims.

My sister's strong liking for domestic life was the result of an infancy spent in surroundings thus full of poetry and sweet melancholy. A few old nuns, driven from their con-

vent by the Revolution and turned school-mistresses, taught her to read and to recite the Psalms in Latin. She learned by heart all the music of the Church; bringing her mind to bear later upon those antique words, which she compared with French and Italian, she contrived to pick up a good deal of Latin, although she never studied it regularly. Her education, nevertheless, would necessarily have remained very incomplete, had it not been for a happy chance which gave her a teacher superior to any thitherto possessed by the country. The noble families of Tréguier had returned from exile completely ruined. A young girl belonging to one of those families, whose education was acquired in

Cloisters of Tuam Cathedral

England, undertook to give lessons. She was a person distinguished alike for her taste and her manners; she made a deep impression upon my sister, and left behind a memory which never died.

The misfortunes by which my sister was early surrounded increased that tendency to concentration which was inborn with her. Our paternal grandfather belonged to a sort of clan of sailors and peasants which peoples the entire province of Goëlo. He made a small fortune by his boat, and settled at Tréguier. Our father served in the fleet of the Republic. After the naval disasters of that time, he commanded ships on his own account, and was by degrees drawn into a considerable business. This was a

great mistake. Utterly unskilled in such matters, simple and incapable of calculation, continually held back by that timidity which makes the sailor a complete child in practical affairs, he saw the little fortune which he had inherited gradually disappear in an abyss whose depth he could not fathom. The events of 1815 brought about commercial crises which were fatal to him. His weak and sentimental nature could not resist these trials; he gradually lost his interest in life. My sister, hour by hour, beheld the ravages which anxiety and misfortune made in that sweet and gentle soul, lost in an order of occupations for which it was not fitted. Amid these hard experiences she gained a precocious ma-

turity. From the age of twelve she was a serious personage, burdened with cares, overwhelmed with grave thoughts and sombre forebodings.

On his return from one of his long voyages on our cold, sad seas, my father had a final gleam of joy: I was born in February, 1823. The arrival of this little brother was a great comfort to my sister. She clung to me with all the strength of a timid, tender heart, to which love is a necessity. I can still recall the petty tyrannies which I exercised over her, and against which she never rebelled. When she came forth bedecked to go to gatherings of girls of her age, I hung upon her skirts, and implored her to return; then she would turn back, take off her holiday

dress and stay with me. One day, in jest, she threatened me that, if I were not good, she would die; she even feigned to be dead, reclining in an arm-chair. The horror which my dear one's silent motionlessness caused me is possibly the strongest impression which I ever received, fate not having permitted me to receive her last sigh. Beside myself with grief, I rushed at her, and gave her arm a terrible bite. She uttered a cry which still rings in my ears. To the reproaches lavished upon me, I made but one reply: "Then why did you die? will you die again?"

In July, 1828, our father's misfortunes ended in a frightful catastrophe. His ship, returning from Saint Malo, entered Tréguier harbor without him.

The crew declared that they had not seen him for several days. For an entire month my mother sought for him in unspeakable agony. At last she learned that a body had been found on the coast at Erqui, a village situated between Saint Brieuc and Cape Frehel. It proved to be that of our father. What was the cause of his death? Was he surprised by one of those accidents so frequent in the life of a seaman? Did he forget himself in one of those long dreams of the infinite which, among Breton races, border on the endless sleep? Did he think that he had earned his rest? Feeling that he had struggled long enough, did he take his seat upon a rock, with the words, "This shall be the stone of my rest

for all eternity, here I will take my rest, for I have chosen it"? We never knew. He was laid beneath the sand, where the waves visit him twice every day. I have never yet been able to erect a stone at his head to tell the passer-by what I owe him. My sister's grief was deep. She inherited her disposition from our father. She loved him tenderly. Whenever she spoke of him, it was with tears. She was assured that his much tried soul was still just and pure in the sight of God.

II.

From this time on, our condition was one of poverty. My brother, who was nineteen years old, went to

Paris and at once began that life of toil and steady application which was never to meet with its full reward. We left Tréguier, where it would have been too painful for us to remain, and took up our abode at Lannion, where my mother's family lived. My sister was seventeen. Her faith was still strong, and the thought of embracing a religious life had more than once strongly occupied her mind. On winter nights she took me to church under her cloak; it was a great pleasure for me to tramp over the snow, thus warmly sheltered from head to foot. If it had not been for me, she would undoubtedly have adopted a vocation which, considering her education, her pious tastes, her lack of fortune, and the customs

of the country, seemed to be exactly suited to her. Her wishes turned especially towards the convent of Saint Anne, at Lannion, where the care of sick people was combined with the education of young girls. Alas! perhaps, had she followed out this purpose, it would have been better for her own peace of mind. Yet she was too good a daughter and too affectionate a sister to prefer her own peace to her duty, even when religious prejudices in which she still shared upheld her. Thenceforth, she regarded herself as responsible for my future. On one occasion, I being clumsy and awkward in my movements, she saw that I was timidly trying to disguise a hole in a worn-out garment. She wept; the sight

of that poor child destined to suffering, with other instincts, wrung her heart. She resolved to accept the struggle of life, and single-handed took up the task of filling the yawning gulf which our father's ill fortune had dug at our feet.

The manual labor of one poor girl was wholly unequal to the work. The career which she embraced was the most cruel of all. It was decided that we should return to Tréguier, and that she should assume the office of a teacher. Of all positions which a well educated person without money can possibly choose, the education of women in a small provincial town is undeniably that which demands most courage. This was the period immediately after

the Revolution of 1830. In those remote provinces it was a critical and trying moment. The nobility during the Restoration, seeing that their privileges were not contested, had frankly taken part in the universal change. Now, feeling themselves humiliated, they took their revenge by withdrawing into a narrow circle and impeding the general growth. The Legitimist families refused to trust their children to any but religious communities; middle class families, following the fashion and imitating people of quality, soon adopted the same custom. Incapable of stooping to those methods of vulgar cleverness without which it is almost impossible for a private educational establishment to succeed, my sister,

with her rare distinction, her deep earnestness, her solid instruction, saw her poor little school deserted. Her modesty, her reserve, the exquisite taste she showed in everything, were so many reasons for failure here. At odds with mean susceptibilities, obliged to contend against the most foolish pretensions, that great and noble soul wore itself away in an endless struggle with a degenerate society, which the Revolution had deprived of the best elements that it formerly possessed without conferring upon it any of its benefits.

Some few persons superior to provincial pettinesses appreciated her. One very intelligent man, free from the prejudices which reign unopposed in provincial towns since the

aristocracy have disappeared or have been debased and stupefied by reaction, conceived a very strong feeling for her. My sister, in spite of a birth-mark to which it took some time to become accustomed, had at this age much charm. Those who only knew her in later years, when worn by a severe climate, cannot imagine how delicate and languorous her features then were. Her eyes were wonderfully soft, her hand was the most exquisite and graceful conceivable. Propositions were made; conditions were discreetly hinted. The effect of these conditions would have been to part her, to some extent, from her family, for whom it was thought she had labored long enough. She refused, although the precision and

balance of her mind inspired her with a genuine liking for those similar qualities which she saw in him. She preferred poverty to wealth unshared with her family. However, her situation became more and more painful. The money due her was so irregularly paid that at times we regretted having left Lannion, where we found greater devotion and sympathy.

She then determined to drain the bitter cup to its dregs (1835). A friend of our family, who about this time visited Paris, mentioned to her a position as under teacher in a small school for girls. The poor creature accepted. She set forth at the age of twenty-four, without a protector or an adviser, for a world of which she knew

absolutely nothing, and where a cruel apprenticeship awaited her.

Her early days in Paris were horrible. That world of coldness, rigidity, and charlatanism, that desert where she had not a single friend, drove her to despair. The intense love which we Bretons feel for our native land, our customs, and our family life, awoke in her with the sharpest keenness. Lost in an ocean where her modesty caused her to be overlooked, prevented by her extreme reserve from forming those friendly relations which console and sustain when they are of no other aid, she became a prey to a profound homesickness which affected her seriously. The most cruel thing to a Breton when first transplanted is the feeling that he is

forsaken by God as well as by men. His sky is overcast. His gentle faith in the universal morality of the world, his calm optimism, are shaken. He believes himself cast out of paradise into an inferno of icy indifference; the voice of beauty and goodness seems to him dead and lifeless; he is ready to exclaim, "How can I sing praises unto the Lord in a strange land!" To fill up the measure of her misery, the first houses into which her fate led her were not worthy of her. Fancy a tender maiden, who never before left her pious little village, her mother, and her friends, suddenly flung into one of those frivolous boarding schools where her serious ideas are wounded at every turn, where she finds in her

superiors nothing but worldliness, indifference, and sordid selfishness. This early experience led her to be very severe in her criticism of Parisian schools for girls. Twenty times she made up her mind to leave; it took all her indomitable courage to detain her there.

Little by little, however, she was appreciated. She was put in charge of a school, a very respectable one this time; but the obstacles which she met in trying to carry out her views amidst the petty miseries inseparable from private institutions, always kept up by their proprietors for the sake of trifling advantages, prevented her from ever finding much pleasure in this form of teaching. She worked sixteen hours a day.

She accepted all the open trials demanded by the regulations. This labor did not have upon her the effect which it would have had upon a commonplace nature. Instead of crushing, it strengthened her, and greatly developed her ideas. Her education, already very broad, became exceptional. She studied the works of the modern school of history, and, later on, but a few words from me were required to give her the most acute critical perception. So, too, her religious ideas became modified. History showed her the insufficiency of any special dogma; but the religious basis existing in her by the gift of nature and by the act of early education was too solid to be shaken. All this growth, which

might have been dangerous in another woman, was harmless here; for she kept it for herself alone. Intellectual culture in her eyes possessed an intrinsic and absolute value; she never dreamed of deriving from it any satisfaction for vanity.

In 1838 she summoned me to Paris. Educated at Tréguier by worthy priests who there conducted a sort of small seminary, I early showed aptitudes for the ecclesiastical condition. The triumphs which I won at school enchanted my sister, who mentioned them to a good and distinguished man, the doctor of the school where she taught, and a very zealous Catholic, Dr. Descuret, author of the "Medicine of the Passions." Descuret spoke to Monseigneur Du-

panloup, who at that time managed the little seminary of Saint Nicholas du Chardonnet in such brilliant fashion, concerning the possible acquisition of an apt pupil, and came back telling my sister that a scholarship in the little seminary was at my disposal. I was then fifteen and a half. My sister, whose Catholic beliefs were beginning to waver, viewed with some regret the wholly clerical bent of my education. But she knew the respect which a child's faith deserves. She never said a word to turn me from the course which I followed with perfect spontaneity. She came to see me every week; she still wore the simple green woollen shawl which had sheltered her proud poverty in Brittany. She

was the same loving, gentle maiden, but with an added firmness and goodness given her by the trials of life and her hard study.

The teacher's career is so ungrateful a one for women, that at the end of five years spent in Paris, after several attacks of illness caused by overwork, my sister was still far from able to provide for the burdens which she had assumed. True, she understood them after a fashion which would have discouraged any one but herself. Our father had left liabilities which far exceeded the value of our paternal mansion, the only property left to us. But our mother was so beloved, and all things in that kindly land were still treated after so patriarchal a fashion, that no

creditor had ever dreamed of urging a settlement. It was agreed that my mother should keep the house, paying what she could and when she could. My sister would not hear of rest until all this heavy burden of debt was lifted.

It was thus that she was led to listen to offers made to her in 1840 to become a private governess in Poland. She would have to leave her native land for years, and to accept the closest servitude. But she had made a much greater effort when she left Brittany and launched out upon the vast world. She set forth in January, 1841, traversed the Black Forest and all Southern Germany, hidden by snow, joined at Vienna the family to which she had engaged herself, then,

crossing the Carpathians, reached the castle of Clemensow, on the shores of the Bug, a gloomy abode, where for ten long years she was to know how bitter exile is, even when one has a noble motive for enduring it.

But now fate had in store for her at least one compensation for many injustices, placing her in a family to which I may well refer, since to its historic lustre it has lately added a contemporary glory which has brought its name to every mouth; it was the family of Count André Zamoyski. The love with which she performed her tasks, the affection which she soon felt for her three pupils, the joy of seeing her efforts bear fruit, — especially in one who from her youth was destined to follow

her teachings longest, Princess Cécile Lubormirska, — the rare esteem which she won from all of that noble family, who after her return to France never ceased to appeal to her advice and her judgment, — the affinity of earnestness and uprightness which existed between her character and that of the home in which she lived, — caused her to forget both the sadness inseparable from her position and the rigors of a climate wholly unsuited to her temperament. She became attached to Poland, and learned, above all, to hold in high esteem the Polish peasant, whom she regarded as a good creature, full of high religious instincts, reminding her of the Breton peasant, but with less energy.

The journeys which she made in

Germany and Italy completed the work of maturing her ideas. She lived at various intervals in Warsaw, Vienna, and Dresden. Venice and Florence enchanted her. But it was Rome above all other cities that won her love. This city, full of profound inspiration as it is, led her to view with much serenity the separation which every philosophic mind is forced to make between the basis of religion and its individual forms. She loved, with Lord Byron, to call it "dear city of the soul." Like all strangers who have lived there, she even became indulgent of all the silly and childish details which the modern institution of the Papacy entails.

III.

I left Saint Sulpice seminary in 1845. Thanks to the liberal and earnest spirit which ruled over that institution, I had carried my philologic studies very far; my religious opinions were greatly shaken thereby. Here again Henrietta was my support. She had outstripped me in this path; her Catholic beliefs had wholly disappeared; but she had always refrained from exerting any influence over me upon this subject. When I told her of the doubts which tormented me, and which made it my duty to abandon a career for which absolute faith was requisite, she was enchanted, and offered to smooth the

difficult passage. I entered upon life, scarce twenty-three years of age, old in thought, but as great a novice, as ignorant of the world, as any one could possibly be. I knew literally no one; I lacked the most ordinary advantages of a youth of fifteen. I was not even Bachelor of Arts. It was agreed that I should search the boarding schools of Paris for some position which would square me, as the slang phrase is, — that is, would give me board and lodging without salary, at the same time leaving me abundant time for independent study. Twelve hundred francs, which she gave me, enabled me to wait, and to supplement all the deficiencies which such a position might entail. Those twelve hundred francs were the corner

stone of my life. I never exhausted them; but they gave me the requisite tranquillity of mind to think at my ease, and made it unnecessary for me to overburden myself with tasks which would have crushed me. Her exquisite letters were my consolation and my support at this turning point in my life.

While I struggled with difficulties increased by my entire lack of experience of the world, her health suffered serious inroads in consequence of the severity of the winters in Poland. She developed a chronic affection of the larynx, which in 1850 became so serious that it was thought necessary for her to return. Moreover, her task was accomplished, our father's debts were paid, the small

properties which he had left to us were now free from encumbrance, in the hands of our mother; my brother had won by his labor a position which promised to make him rich. We decided to unite our fortunes. In September, 1850, I joined her in Berlin. Those ten years of exile had utterly transformed her. The wrinkles of old age were prematurely printed on her brow; of the charm which she still possessed when she took leave of me in the parlor of the Saint Nicholas seminary, nothing now remained but the delicious expression of her ineffable goodness.

Then began for us those delightful years, the mere memory of which brings tears to my eyes. We took a small apartment in a garden near

Val-de-Grâce. Our solitude was absolute. She had no friends and made little effort to acquire any. Our windows looked out upon the garden of the Carmelites in the Rue d'Enfer. The life of those recluses, during the long hours which I spent at the library, in some sort regulated her existence and afforded her only source of amusement. Her respect for my work was extreme. I have seen her in the evening sit for hours beside me, scarcely breathing for fear of interrupting me; yet she could not bear to have me out of her sight, and the door between our two bedrooms was always open. Her love was so discreet and so secure that the secret communion of our thoughts was enough for her. She naturally

so exacting, so jealous in her affections, was content with a few minutes out of the day provided she was sure that she alone was loved. By her rigid economy, she provided for me, with singularly limited resources, a home where nothing was ever lacking, nay, which had its austere charm. Our thoughts were so perfectly in accord that we hardly needed to impart them each to the other. Our general opinions as to the world and God were identical. There was no shade of distinction, however delicate, in the theories which I revolved at that period that she did not understand. Upon many points of modern history, which she had studied at the fountain head, she outstripped me. The general purpose of my career, the plan of

unwavering sincerity which I formed, was so thoroughly the combined product of our two consciences that, had I been tempted to depart from it, she would have stood beside me, like another self, to recall me to my duty.

Her share in the direction of my ideas was thus a very large one. She was a matchless secretary to me; she copied all my works, and grasped them so fully that I could depend upon her as upon a living *index* of my own thought. I am infinitely indebted to her in the matter of literary style. She read the proofs of everything I wrote, and her acute criticism, with infinite keenness, discovered errors which I had not observed. She had acquired an excellent mode of writing, wholly taken from antique

sources, and so pure, so precise, that I think no one since the days of Port Royal ever set up an ideal of diction more perfectly correct. This made her very severe; she accepted very few modern writers, and when she saw the essays which I wrote before our reunion, and which I had not been able to send to her in Poland, she was only half satisfied with them. She agreed with their tendency, and in any event she thought that in this order of intimate and individual thought, expressed with moderation, every one should give utterance with entire freedom to that which is in him. But the form struck her as careless and abrupt; she discovered exaggerated touches, a hard tone, a disrespectful way of treating lan-

guage. She convinced me that one may say anything and everything in the simple, correct style of good authors, and that new expressions or violent images always proceed either from improper affectation or from ignorance of our genuine riches. Hence, a great change in my mode of writing dates from my reunion with her. I acquired the habit of composing with a view to her remarks, risking many touches to see what effect they would produce on her, and determined to sacrifice them if she asked me to do so. This mental process, when she ceased to live, became to me like the painful feeling of one who has been amputated, who continually acts with a view to the lost limb. She was an organ of

my intellectual life, and a portion of my own being truly entered the tomb with her.

In all moral matters we had come to see with the same eyes, and to feel with the same heart. She was so thoroughly familiar with my order of thought that she almost always knew beforehand what I was about to say, the idea dawning upon her and upon me at the same moment. But, in one sense, she was greatly my superior. In spiritual things I was still seeking material for interesting essays or artistic studies; with her nothing marred the purity of her intimate communion with the good. Her religion of the true could not endure the least discordant note. One thing that wounded her in my

writings was a touch of irony which possessed me, and which I mingled with the best things. I had never suffered, and I found a certain philosophy in the discreet smile provoked by human weakness or vanity. This trick wounded her, and I gradually gave it up for her sake. I now know how right she was. The good should be simply good; any touch of mockery implies a remnant of vanity and of personal challenge which ends by being in bad taste.

Her religion had attained to the last degree of purification. She absolutely rejected the supernatural; but she retained a strong attachment to Christianity. It was not precisely Protestantism, even that of the broadest description, which pleased her. She

preserved a charming recollection of Catholicism, of its music, its Psalms, of the pious practices with which she had been lulled in childhood. She was a saint, without the rigid faith in symbols and the narrow observances. About a month before her death we had a religious conversation with good Dr. Gaillardot on the terrace before our house at Ghazir. She held me back from the abyss of formulas in regard to an unconscious Deity and a purely ideal immortality into which I allowed myself to be drawn. Without being a Deist in the vulgar sense, she did not wish religion to be reduced to a pure abstraction. In practice, at least, everything was clear to her. "Yes," she said to us, "at my last hour I shall have the

Ghazir Bay

comfort of thinking that I have done as much good as possible ; if there be anything which is not vanity, it is that."

An exquisite feeling for nature was the source of her keenest enjoyments. A fine day, a sunbeam, a flower, were enough to fill her with rapture. She thoroughly understood the delicate art of the great idealist schools of Italy ; but she could take no pleasure in the brutal or violent art whose object is anything but beauty. Special circumstances gave her a rare knowledge of the history of the art of the Middle Ages. She collected for me all the notes for the address on the condition of the fine arts in the fourteenth century, which is to form a part of Volume XXIV. of the "Literary History of France." To do this,

she examined with admirable patience and exactitude all the great archæological collections published within half a century, extracting everything which bore upon our subject. Her opinions, which she set down at the same time, were strikingly correct, and I seldom failed to adopt them. To complete our researches, we took a journey together to the land where Gothic art grew up, — to Vexin, Valois, Beauvais, the region of Noyon, Laon, and Rheims. In these researches, which interested her, she displayed an amazing activity. Her ideal was an obscure, industrious life, surrounded by affections. She often repeated the phrase of Thomas à Kempis, *In angello, cum libello.*[1] She spent very

[1] In a little nook, with a little book.

happy hours in these quiet occupations. Her mind was then completely at peace, and her heart, usually full of alarm, entered into full rest.

Her capacity for work was extraordinary. I have seen her, for days at a time, devote herself unceasingly to the task which she had taken up. She took part in editing educational journals, especially the one in charge of her friend, Mlle. Ulliac-Trémadeure. She never signed her name, and it was impossible, with her great modesty, that she could ever win, in this line, more than the esteem of a select few. Moreover, the detestable taste which in France presides over the composition of works meant for the education of women left her no room to hope either for great satisfaction or

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great success. It was particularly to oblige her friend, who was old and infirm, that she undertook this labor. The writings wherein she may be found entire are her letters. She wrote them to perfection. Her notes of travel were also excellent. I trusted to her to tell the unscientific part of our journey to the East. Alas! all knowledge of this side of my enterprise, which I left to her, perished with her. What I found on this head in her papers is very good. We hope to be able to publish it, completing it by her letters. We shall then publish a story which she wrote of the great maritime expeditions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. She made very extensive researches for this task, and she brought to bear on it a critical

judgment very rare in works intended for children. She did nothing by halves; the rectitude of her judgment was shown in everything by an exquisite taste for solidity and truth.

She had not what is called wit, if by that word we understand something airy and sly, as is the French fashion. She never made a mock of anybody. Malice was odious to her; she regarded it as a species of cruelty. I remember that at a *Pardon* (pilgrimage) in Lower Brittany, to which we went in boats, our bark was preceded by another containing certain poor ladies, who, wishing to make themselves beautiful for the festival, had hit upon pitiful arrangements of their attire, which was in very bad taste. The people in whose

company we were, laughed at them, and the poor ladies observed this. My sister burst into tears: it seemed to her barbarous to jest at well meaning persons who had for a time forgotten their misfortunes to be cheerful, and who had perhaps submitted to great privations out of deference to the world. In her eyes, a ridiculous person was to be pitied; she at once loved him and took his part against those who scoffed at him.

Hence her aversion to the world and the poor show which she made in ordinary conversation, — almost always a tissue of malice and frivolity. She was prematurely old, and she generally added still more to her age by her dress and manners. She was a worshipper of misfortune; she hailed, almost

cultivated, every excuse for tears. Sorrow became to her a familiar and agreeable feeling. Ordinary people did not, in general, understand her, and considered her somewhat stiff and embarrassed. Nothing which was not completely good could please her. Everything about her was true and profound; she could not dishonor herself. The lower classes, peasants, on the contrary, regarded her as exquisitely kind, and those who knew how to take her on the right side soon learned to recognize the depth of her nature and her real distinction.

She sometimes betrayed delightful feminine touches; she became a young girl again; she clung to life almost with a smile, and the veil between her and the world seemed to

fall. These fleeting moments of delicious weakness, transient gleams of a vanished dawn, were full of melancholy sweetness. In this she was superior to persons who profess, in their gloomy abstraction, the detachment preached by the mystics. She loved life; she found a relish in it; she could smile at an ornament, at a feminine trifle, as we might smile at a flower. She did not say to Nature that frenzied *Abrenuntio* (I renounce thee) of Christian ascetism. Virtue to her was no stern rigor, no studied effort: it was the natural instinct of a beautiful soul aiming at goodness by a spontaneous exertion, serving God without fear or tremor.

Thus for six years we lived a very lofty and a very pure life. My

position was still very modest; but it was she herself who so willed it. She would not have allowed me, even had I had such a thought, to sacrifice the least part of my independence to my advancement. The misfortunes which unexpectedly overtook my brother, and led to the loss of all our savings, did not disturb her. She would have gone abroad again, had it been necessary for the steady progress of my life. My God! did I do all that lay in my power to make her happy? How bitterly I reproach myself now for not being sufficiently open and affectionate with her, for not telling her oftener how much I loved her, for yielding too much to my taste for silent concentration, for not taking the utmost advantage of every

hour that was left me! O could I recover but a single one of those moments which I did not spend in making her happy! But I take her elect soul to witness that she was always at the core of my heart, that she ruled my entire moral life as it was never given to any one to rule, that she was always the primary cause of my sorrows and my joys. If I sinned against her, it was due to a stiffness of manner which those who know me should not heed, and from an awkward feeling of respect which made me avoid with her everything which might seem a profanation of her sanctity. She herself was restrained by a similar feeling in regard to me. My long clerical education, for four years absolutely solitary, left

an impress on my disposition in this regard which her delicate reserve prevented her from combating as much as she might.

IV.

My lack of experience of life, and above all my ignorance of the deep differences which exist between the heart of a man and that of a woman, led me to require of her a sacrifice which would have been beyond the strength of any but her. My sense of the duty which I owed to such a friend was too profound to allow me to dream of changing anything in our condition without her permission. But it was she herself who, with her accustomed nobility,

made the first advances. From the earliest days of our reunion, she had urged me to marry. She often returned to the charge. She even talked, without my knowledge, with one of our friends, of a match which she had planned for me, but which was never carried out. The introductory step which she took in this matter led me to make a great mistake. I sincerely believed that she would not feel hurt whenever I should tell her that I had found a person of my choice worthy to be associated with her. When I allowed her to talk to me of marriage, I had never understood that she was to leave me. I had always supposed that she would still be to me what she had been thus far, the accomplished and well be-

loved sister, incapable of taking or of giving offence, too wholly sure of the love with which she inspired me to be wounded by that which another might win. I now see the error of such a conception. A woman's love is unlike that of a man; all affection with her is exclusive and jealous; she does not admit any diversity of nature between the different loves. But I was excusable; I was deceived by my extreme simplicity of heart, and also to some degree by her. To speak truly, was she not herself mistaken in regard to her courage? I think so. When the marriage which she had planned for me was set aside, she felt a certain regret, although the scheme in some respects, had ceased to please her. But, O mystery of women's

hearts! the trial which she hastened to meet became a cruel one when it was offered her. She was ready to accept the bitter cup which her own hands had prepared; she now shrank from that which I offered her, although I had done my utmost to make it sweet to her. Terrible result of excessive delicacy! The brother and sister who had loved each other so fondly were at last forced, for lack of speaking with sufficient frankness, to lay traps for each other unwittingly, to seek and not to find each other. Those were very bitter days for us. We went through all the storms and tempests known to love. When she told me that, when she suggested my marriage, it was only to try if I were sufficient unto her, when she declared

that the moment of my union to another must be that of her departure, the arrow entered into my soul. Was the feeling that she felt an undivided one? did she really wish to oppose the union which I desired? Certainly not. It was the tempest of a passionate soul, the revolt of a heart violent in its love. So soon as she and Cornelia Scheffer met, each conceived for the other the affection which afterwards became so sweet to them both. Ary Scheffer's grand and lofty ways took possession of her and carried her away. She recognized that there was here no room for vulgar littlenesses and mean susceptibilities. She wished to yield; but at the decisive moment the woman was rearoused: she had no more power to yield.

At last, I was compelled to put an end to this cruel uncertainty. Forced to choose between two affections, I sacrificed all to the one of older date, to the one which seemed most like duty. I informed Miss Scheffer that I could never see her again unless my dear sister's heart ceased to bleed. This was in the evening; I went home and told my sister what I had done. A violent revolution took place within her; she felt cruel remorse at having prevented a union desired by me and highly appreciated by her. Next morning, very early, she hastened to Mr. Scheffer's house; she spent several hours with my betrothed; they wept together; they parted cheerfully, and friends. In fact, after my marriage, as before, everything was in common

between us. It was her economies which made our youthful household possible. Had it not been for her, I could never have met my new responsibilities. My confidence in her goodness was such that the ingenuousness of such conduct did not strike me until much later.

These alternations were prolonged: the cruel and charming demon of loving alarm, of jealousy, of sudden revolts, of hasty regrets, which dwells in the heart of women, often waked once more to torture her. The idea of breaking away from a life in which, in her hours of bitterness, she affected to find no place, was often suggested by her saddened speech. But these were remnants of evil dreams, which gradually faded away. The delicate

tact, the exquisite heart of the woman whom I had given her for a sister, gained a complete triumph. In moments of fleeting reproach, Cornelia's enchanting intervention, her gayety, full of good nature and grace, changed our tears to smiles; we ended by a general embrace. The uprightness of heart and feeling displayed before me by these two women, contending with the most delicate problem of love, won my admiration. I at last blessed the agonies which had obtained for me such beautiful results. My artless hope of seeing another than myself complete her happiness, and introduce into her life a gayety and activity which I was unable to lend it, was at times realized. More happy than skilful, I saw my imprudence turned to

wisdom, and I enjoyed the fruit of my temerity.

The birth of my little Ary dried the last trace of all her tears. Her affection for the child was actual adoration. The maternal instinct which overflowed within her found its natural issue here. Her sweetness, her inexhaustible patience, her love for all that is simple and good, inspired her with inexpressible affection for children. It was a sort of religious worship, in which her melancholy nature found an infinite charm. When my second child was born, a daughter whom I lost in a few months, she repeatedly told me that this little girl had come to take her place with me. She loved the thought of death, and took endless pleasure in it: "You

will see, dear ones," she would say, "that the little flower which we have lost will leave us a very sweet perfume."

The image of that sweet little dead baby was long sacred to her. Thus united with our sorrows and our joys with all the strength of her exquisite sensibility, she at last completely accepted the new life in which I had made her a partner. I count it as one of my great moral satisfactions that I could realize in the two women whom fate has attached to my life, this masterpiece of abnegation and pure devotion. They loved each other with a lively affection, and I have now the consolation to feel that there is one beside me whose grief almost equals mine. Each of them had her

Ernest Renan
from a painting by Henri Scheffer, 1860

distinct place with me, and this without division or exclusion. Each of them in her own way was all in all to me. A few days before her death, at a moment when she seemed to have a foreboding of her approaching end, my sister uttered words which showed me that the old wound was completely healed, and that only the memory of past bitterness remained.

V.

In May, 1860, when the Emperor offered me a scientific mission to ancient Phœnicia, she was one of the persons who most strongly advised me to accept. Her political opinions were those of very firm liberalism;

but she thought that all party feelings should be set aside when there was an opportunity to carry out a plan which seemed good, and from which there was nothing to be gained but danger. It was from the first decided that she should go with me. Accustomed to her care and to the excellent aid which she lent me in all my labors, I also needed her to manage the expenses and keep the accounts. This she did with scrupulous care, and, thanks to her, I was enabled for a whole year to conduct a very complicated enterprise without being for an instant hampered by material cares. Her activity amazed all who saw her. Without her, indubitably I could never in so short a space of time have executed the pos-

sibly too extensive programme which I had laid out for myself.

She never for a moment left me. On the loftiest peaks of Lebanon, as well as in the deserts of the Jordan, she followed me step by step, saw all that I saw. Had I died, she could have related my travels almost as well as I could myself. The terrible mountain paths and the privations inseparable from such explorations never deterred her. My heart again and again sunk within me when I saw her tottering on the verge of a precipice. She displayed rare strength on horseback. She would travel eight or ten hours a day. Her health, usually frail enough, was firmly upheld by the power of her will; but her whole nervous system was strung

to a pitch which was betrayed by violent attacks of neuralgia. Two or three times, in the midst of the desert, she fell into a condition which alarmed us. Her courage deceived us. She had embraced my scheme of research with such passion that nothing could part her from me until it was fully accomplished.

Moreover, this journey was the source of very keen enjoyment to her. I may truly say that it was her only year without tears, and almost the sole reward of her life. The freshness of her impressions was unimpaired; she yielded to the sensations of this new world with the artless joy of a child. Nothing can equal the charm of Syria in spring and autumn. A balmy air pervades all nature, and

seems to lend life something of its own lightness. The most beautiful flowers, fine cyclamens particularly, spring abundantly from every crevice of the rocks; in the plains bordering on Amrit and Tortosa, the feet of the horses crush thick carpets of the rarest flowers of our garden beds. The streams flowing from the mountain are in delightful contrast with the fierce sun which drinks them up.

Our first halt was at the village of Amschit, three quarters of an hour away from Jebail (Byblus), founded some twenty five or thirty years ago by the rich Maronite, Mikhael Tobia. Zakhia, Mikhael's heir, made our stay extremely agreeable. He gave us a pretty house from which we overlooked Byblus and the sea. The

gentle manners of the natives, their constant attentions, the affection which they conceived for us and especially for her, touched her deeply. She loved to return to this village, and we made it, as it were, our centre of action for the whole region of Byblus. The village of Sarba, near Djouni, the abode of the good, kind Khadra family, well known to all Frenchmen who have travelled in the Orient, also became a favorite spot with her. The delicious harbor of Kastoria, with the villages along its shores, its convents clinging to every peak, its mountains plunging into the sea, and its pure waves, enchanted her; every time that we reached it, coming from Jebail, by the cliffs to the north, a hymn of joy rose from her heart.

She was greatly attached to the Maronites, speaking generally. Her visit to the convent of Bkerke, where the patriarch then lived, in the midst of bishops of rural simplicity, left a very agreeable memory. On the other hand, she felt the utmost aversion for the petty European gossip of Beyroot, and the barrenness of cities such as Sidon, where the Mussulman type prevails. The vast spectacles which she witnessed at Tyre enchanted her; in the lofty pavilion which she occupied, she was literally rocked by the tempest. The wandering life, so attractive in the long run, became dear to her. My wife every evening invented a thousand excuses to persuade her not to stay alone in her tent; she yielded after a slight

resistance ; she delighted in that close and common atmosphere, together with those who loved her, in the midst of the wild immensity.

But it was above all her journey to Palestine that enraptured her. Jerusalem with its matchless memories, Naplouse and its lovely valley, Carmel, flowery in spring, Galilee particularly, an earthly paradise laid waste, but where the Divine breath is still apparent, held us for six weeks captive to a magic spell. From Tyre and Oum-el-Awamid, we had already made several little trips of about a week each, in the direction of the antique regions of Asher and Nephtali, which have witnessed such great deeds. When I showed her for the first time, from Kasyoum, beyond

Lake Haleh (the waters of Merom), the entire region of the upper Jordan, and in the distance the bed of Lake Gennesareth, the cradle of Christianity, she thanked me, and told me that I had repaid her for her whole life by showing her those places. Superior to the narrow sentiment which attaches historic memories to material objects, almost always apocryphal and destitute of any solid title to veneration, she looked for the spirit, the idea, the general impression. Our long expeditions in that beautiful land, Mount Hermon always before us, its ravines alone being distinguishable upon the azure of the sky as lines of snow, are graven on our memory like dreams of another universe.

In the month of July, my wife, who had been with us since January, was forced to leave us in obedience to other duties. The excavations had been made, the army had evacuated Syria. We were left alone together to superintend the removal of the objects discovered, to complete the exploration of upper Lebanon, and to prepare for a final campaign in Cyprus during the following autumn. I now regret most bitterly my decision thus to prolong our stay in Syria during the months most dangerous to Europeans. Our last journey to Lebanon greatly exhausted her. We remained three days at Maschnaka, beyond the river Adonis, living in a mud hut. The constant transition from the cold valleys to the torrid

rocks, the poor food, the necessity of spending the night in ceiled houses, which, if we would not suffocate, must be thrown wide open, sowed in her the seed of nervous pains, which speedily developed. On leaving the deep valleys of Tannourin, after sleeping at the convent of Mar-Jakoub, on one of the steepest peaks in that region, we entered the scorching neighborhood of Toula. The abrupt contrast overcame us. About eleven o'clock, at the village of Helta, she was attacked by intense pain. I made her rest in the priest's poor hut; farther on, while I was copying some inscriptions, she tried to sleep in a chapel. But the native women would not let her rest; they crowded about to see her, to touch her. At last we

reached Toula. There she passed two days in extreme agony. We were destitute of all supplies. The rude simplicity of the natives added to her torments. Never having seen a European, they took the house by storm, and when I went out to make my researches they tormented her in an unendurable style. As soon as she was able to ride a horse, we went to Amschit, where she felt somewhat better. But her left eye was affected; the vision of that eye was weakened, and at times she suffered from true diplopia.[1]

The intense heat along the coast and our fatigued condition led me to fix our residence at Ghazir, a point

[1] A disease of the eye in which objects appear double, and even triple.

situated at a great height above the sea, at the head of Kesrouan bay. We took leave of our good people of Amschit and Jebail. The sun was setting as we reached the mouth of the river Adonis; there we rested. Although she was by no means free from pain, the voluptuous calm of that beautiful spot took possession of her; she had a interval of gentle gayety. We climbed Ghazir mountain by moonlight; she was full of content, and we thought, when we left the burning coast, that we had left behind us the causes of the sufferings which we had found there.

Ghazir is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful spots in the world; the neighboring valleys are full of delicious verdure, and the slope of

Aramun, a little higher up, is the most charming landscape which I saw in Lebanon; but the native population, spoiled by contact with the would-be aristocratic families of the country, does not possess the usual good qualities of Maronite people. There we found a little house, with a pretty vine arbor. Here we took a few days of very sweet rest. We had snow from the crevices of the high mountain. Our poor travelling companions, my sister's Arab mare and my mule Sada, grazed before our eyes. For the first two weeks, Henrietta suffered far less; then the pains disappeared, and God at last granted her a few days of pure happiness before she left this earth.

Those days have left an ineradicable

impress on my memory. The delays inseparable from the difficult transactions which we were just then completing, left me ample leisure. I resolved to write out all the ideas in regard to the life of Jesus which had been germinating in my mind since my stay in the land of Tyre and my journey to Palestine. As I read the Gospels in Galilee, the personality of that great Founder had vividly appeared to me. In the midst of the profoundest repose imaginable, I wrote, with the aid of the Gospels and Josephus, a "Life of Jesus," which I continued at Ghazir up to the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. Delicious and all too fleeting hours, oh may eternity be like you! From morning till night I was as if intoxicated with the idea

which was unfolded before me. I slept with it, and the first beams of the sun appearing behind the mountain revealed it to me clearer and more vivid than the night before. Henrietta was day by day familiar with the progress of my task; as I wrote a page, she copied it. "This book," she said to me, "will be very dear to me; in the first place, because we have done it together, and then because it pleases me." Her mind was never before so elevated. In the evening we paced up and down our terrace by the light of the stars: she then shared with me her reflections, full of profundity and tact, some of which were genuine revelations to me. Her joy was complete, and those were undoubtedly

the sweetest moments of her life. Our intellectual and moral communion had never before reached such a degree of intimacy. She told me several times that these days were her paradise. A sense of sweet sadness was mingled with it. Her pains were only lulled to sleep; they waked again at intervals, like a fatal warning. She then complained that fate should be so miserly with her, and should snatch away the only hours of perfect joy which it had ever granted her.

In the early days of September, further stay at Ghazir was rendered very inconvenient for me by the needs of the mission, which required my presence at Beyroot. We bade farewell, not without tears, to our house

at Ghazir, and for the last time we traversed the beautiful road along the Chien River, with which for a year we had been so familiar.

Although the heat was very great, we spent some pleasant moments at Beyroot. The days were oppressive, but the nights were delicious, and every evening the view of Sannin, robed by the setting sun in an Olympian atmosphere, was a feast for the eyes. The arrangements for transportation were almost completed; nothing remained for me to do but to take the journey to Cyprus. We began to talk of returning; we already dreamed of soft, pale suns, the cool, damp feeling of Northern autumns, those green meadows on the shores of the Oise which we had

traversed at the same season two years before. She dwelt with pleasure on the joy of embracing little Ary and our old mother. She had certain melancholy moods when all her family reminiscences recurred to her ; at such moments, she would talk to me of our father, of his kind, humble, tender, and gentle soul. I never saw her more attractive, more sublime.

On Sunday, September 15, Admiral Le Barbier de Tinan informed me that the Cato would devote a week to fresh attempts to dislodge two great sarcophagi at Jebail, which it had at first been judged impossible to remove. My presence at Jebail during that week was not needful: it would have been enough had I embarked on the Cato to give certain

suggestions, returning by land to Beyroot. But I knew that separations of this sort displeased her. Besides, as she was very fond of staying at Amschit, I hit upon another plan: for both of us to set sail on the Cato, spend the week at Amschit and return with the Cato. We did indeed start on Monday. Ever since the previous evening she had been slightly indisposed; but the passage did her good. She greatly enjoyed the view of Lebanon in all the splendor of summer, and while I went, with the chief officer, to arrange for the removal of the sarcophagi, she rested quietly on board. That evening, when the sun had set, we went up to Amschit. Our good friends, who had not expected to see us again, received

us with open arms. She was entirely contented. After dinner, we spent a part of the night on the terrace of Zakhia's house. The sky was wonderful; I reminded her of that passage in the book of Job where the old patriarch boasts, as a rare merit, that he has never carried his hand to his mouth in token of adoration when he saw the army of the stars in its splendor and the moon advancing with majesty. All the spirit of the ancient faiths of Syria seemed to spring to life before us. Byblos lay at our feet; towards the south, in the sacred region of Lebanon, loomed the strange indentations of the cliffs and forests of Jebel-Mousa, where legend places the death of Adonis; the sea, curving to the north towards Botrys,

seemed to surround us on two sides. That day was the last perfectly happy day of my life; henceforth, all joy will take me back to the past, and will recall her who is no longer here to share it.

On Tuesday, she was less well. Still I was not yet alarmed; this indisposition seemed to me nothing compared with those which I had seen her endure. I had again enthusiastically taken up my "Life of Jesus"; we worked all day, and at night she was as cheerful as ever on the terrace. On Wednesday, the trouble increased. I then determined to ask the surgeon of the Cato to visit her. He expressed no anxiety. On Thursday, she was in the same condition. But the day was made ominous

to us by the fact that I was attacked in my turn. I had reached the end of my mission without serious illness. By a fatal chance, the memory of which will haunt me all my life like a nightmare, the only moment when I was forced to surrender was the one when I should have watched by her dying bed.

On Thursday morning, I had occasion to go down to the harbor of Jebail to confer with the commandant. As I came back to Amschit, I was conscious that the sun, reflected from the burning rocks of which the hill is composed, had affected me. In the afternoon, I had a violent attack of fever, together with fierce twinges of neuralgia. It was really the same trouble which killed my poor sister.

The doctor of the Cato, skilful as he was, did not recognize it. These pernicious fevers occur in Syria with symptoms which none but doctors who have lived in the country recognize. Sulphate of quinine given in very large doses might even then have saved us both. That evening I felt that I was becoming delirious. I told the doctor, who, completely blinded as to the nature of our disease, attached no importance to it, and left us. I then had in a terrible vision the apprehension of that which three days later became a frightful reality. I shudderingly foresaw the dangers which we ran if we fell alone, without acquaintance, into the hands of worthy people destitute of judgment or knowledge, guided by the wild-

est notions in regard to medicine. I took leave of life with a feeling of anguish. The loss of my papers, and of my Life of Jesus in particular, appeared to me certain. Our night was fearful; but it seems that my poor sister passed it more quietly than I did, for I remember that next morning she was strong enough to say to me, "Your night was one long groan."

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday hover before me like the scattered fragments of a painful dream. The attack which came near carrying me off on the following Monday had a sort of retroactive effect, and almost entirely effaced the memory of the three preceding days. A fatal chance willed it that the doctor should see us at

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moments of alleviation, and could not foresee the coming crisis. I still worked, but I was sensible that my work was wretched. I had come to the episode of the Last Supper in the story of the Passion. When I reread those lines later on, I found them strangely confused. My thoughts revolved in a sort of endless circle, and throbbed like the side rod of an engine thrown out of gear. I recall various other particular circumstances. I wrote to the Sisters of Charity at Beyroot to beg some wine of quinine, which they were the only people in Syria to make; but I was conscious of the incoherency of my letter.

It seems as if neither of us had a very clear sense of the serious nature of our disease. I decided that

we would start for France on the following Thursday: "Yes, yes, let us go," said she, with perfect confidence. "Oh unhappy woman that I am!" she said at another time, "I see that I am destined to suffer much." On one of these two days, about sunset, she was able to move from one room to the other. She was on the sofa in the parlor where I lay working as usual. The shutters were open, our eyes turned to Jebel-Mousa. At that instant she had a presentiment of her end, but not of so speedy an end. Her eyes were wet with tears; her face, drawn by suffering, recovered a slight color, and she cast a sad, sweet look with me at her past life. "I will make my will," she said; "you shall be my

heir. I have little to leave, but still it is something; I wish you to build a family tomb out of my savings; we must lie together, we must be close together. Little Ernestine must lie with us." Then she made a mental calculation, mapped out the interior arrangement with her finger, and seemed to desire a dozen inches. She spoke with tears in her eyes of little Ary, of our aged mother. She told me what I was to give her niece; she tried to think of something that would please Cornelia, and she thought of a little Italian book (the "Fioretti" of St. Francis) which M. Berthelot had given her. "I have loved you very much," she said; "sometimes my affection has made you suffer; I have been

unjust, exclusive; but it is because I have loved you as no one loves in this generation, as perhaps no one should love." I burst into tears. I talked to her of our return; I brought the conversation back to little Ary, knowing that this would move her pleasantly. She readily accepted the change of theme, and dwelt on points which touched her most. She again recalled the dear memory of our father. This gleam was the last for either of us. We were in the interval of two attacks of pernicious fever; the final attack was delayed but a few hours. Except at moments when the doctor called, we were alone, in the hands of our Arab servants and the villagers, all the other people belonging to the

mission having left or being occupied elsewhere.

I have little distinct recollection of the fatal Sunday, or rather others were forced to revive for me these traces, which at first were wholly obliterated. I continued to act all day but like an automaton retaining the impulse given it. I still distinctly recall the feeling which I experienced when I saw the peasants on their way to mass; usually, at that time, when it was known that we too would attend, there was a general gathering in our honor. It was decided that next morning, before daylight, sailors should be sent with a cot-bed to fetch my sister, and that the Cato should convey us directly to Beyroot. Towards noon, I must have been still at

work in my poor dear's room, for I have been told that my books and notes were found there scattered over the matting upon which I was accustomed to sit. In the afternoon, my sister felt very much worse. I wrote to the doctor to come as quickly as possible, suggesting some injury to the heart. I have no recollection of having written this letter, and when it was shown to me a few days after, it recalled nothing. But I still lived, for Antoun, our servant, told me that I ordered my sister to be carried into the parlor which I used as a bedroom, that I helped him to lift her and that I remained with her for some time. Perhaps we took a long, last leave of each other then, and she spoke sacred words to me, which the

terrible sponge that soon passed over my brain has utterly effaced. Antoun assured me that she never for a moment had any consciousness of death; but he was so far from intelligent, and knew so little French, that he may not have grasped what we said to each other.

The doctor came about six o'clock, accompanied by the commanding officer. Both thought that it was out of the question to think of transporting my sister to Beyroot next day. By a strange coincidence, the fit seized me while they were with us; I lost consciousness in the commandant's arms. The two gentlemen, thoroughly upright and sensible, but thus far mistaken as to the serious nature of our condition, held a council together.

The doctor, frankly admitting his inability to treat a disease whose progress baffled him, begged the commandant to return to Beyroot, and come back again at once with fresh help. The commandant accepted this advice. But yielding too implicitly to the formalities of Turkish naval customs, which other officers, even in the absence of grave reasons, did not heed, he did not start until four o'clock on Monday morning. At six, he was at Beyroot, and spoke with Admiral Pâris, who, with his usual rare courtesy, ordered him to return immediately, after taking on board Dr. Louvel of the Algesiras, the chief surgeon of the squadron, and Dr. Suquet, the French officer of health at Beyroot, — universally acknowledged to

be the one of all French physicians who had studied Syrian diseases most thoroughly.

At half-past ten, all these gentlemen were at Amschit. Almost simultaneously, Dr. Gaillardot arrived by land. Since the previous evening, we had both lain unconscious, face to face, in Zakhia's large parlor, cared for only by Antoun. The good Zakhia family stood about us, weeping and protecting us from the priest, a sort of madman who insisted upon nursing us. I am told that my sister gave absolutely no sign of consciousness during the whole of this time. Dr. Suquet, to whom of course our treatment was left, soon saw, alas! that it was too late for her. Every effort to produce a reaction was in

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vain. Sulphate of quinine, which, administered in large doses, is the sovereign remedy in these terrible attacks, could not be swallowed. Oh, can it be that a few hours earlier these fresh attentions would have saved her! One cruel thought at least will forever haunt me. Had we stayed at Beyroot, although the attack might not have been warded off, yet Dr. Suquet, called in time, in all probability might have conquered it.

All day Monday my noble, tender friend lay dying. She expired on Tuesday, September 24, at three o'clock in the morning. The Maronite priest, summoned at the last moment, administered extreme unction according to his rite. Sincere tears were not lacking beside her dead

body; but, O God! who could have told me that the day would come when my Henrietta should pass away within two feet of me and I not receive her last breath! Yes, had it not been for the fatal swoon which overtook me on Sunday night, I believe that my kisses, the sound of my voice, would have held back her soul a few hours longer, — long enough, perhaps, for salvation. I cannot persuade myself that her loss of consciousness was so complete that I could not have broken through the spell. Two or three times, in fever dreams, I have been tormented by a terrible doubt. I have thought I heard her call me from the vault in which her body was laid! The presence of French physicians at the

moment of her death no doubt forbids this horrible supposition. But that she should have been tended by any one but me, that servile hands should have touched her, that I should not have conducted her funeral rites and attested to the earth by my tears that she was my well beloved sister, that she should have failed to see my face if her eye beheld for one instant more the world which she was about to leave, — this, this it is which will forever oppress me and poison all my joys. If she knew that she was dying without me beside her, if she knew that I was at my last breath at her side and that she could not nurse me, oh then that heavenly creature must have died with hell in her heart! Consciousness is a thing so dissimilar

both in its aspects and in the memory of it which remains, that I find it hard at times to be wholly at ease on this point.

Less exhausted than my sister, I bore the large dose of sulphate of quinine which was at last administered. I recovered some sensation on Tuesday morning, about an hour before my beloved passed away. What proves that I was far more conscious all through Sunday, and even during my delirium, than my recollections would go to show, is the fact that my first question was to ask after my sister. "She is very ill," was the reply. I continually repeated the same question in the semi-sleep in which I lay. "She is dead," was the answer at last. It was useless to try to deceive me, for

preparations were on foot to remove me to Beyroot. I implored to be allowed to see her; this was absolutely refused. I was put upon the very same cot-bed which had been intended for her conveyance. I was in a state of complete numbness; the frightful blow just dealt me seemed to me one of my feverish hallucinations. I was devoured by horrible thirst. A scorching dream perpetually bore me back with her to Apheca, to the sources of the Adonis River, under the giant nut trees which grow below the cascade. She sat beside me on the cool grass; I held to her dying lips a cup of icy water; we both bathed in those life giving springs, weeping, and with a sense of all-pervasive melancholy. It was not till

two days later that I recovered complete consciousness, and that my misfortune appeared to me as a fearful reality.

Dr. Gaillardot remained at Amschit after our departure to superintend my poor dear's funeral. The people of the village, in whom she had inspired great affection, followed her coffin. Means for embalming were wholly wanting; a temporary resting place had to be provided. Zakhia offered for the purpose Mikhael Tobia's tomb, situated at the farther end of the village, near a pretty chapel, and in the shadow of fine palms. He only asked that, when she was removed, an inscription might show that a Frenchwoman had rested in that place. There she still lies. I hesitate to take

her away from those beautiful mountains where she passed such sweet moments, from the midst of those good people whom she loved, to lay her in one of our gloomy cemeteries, of which she had a horror. Of course I want her to rest beside me some day; but who can say in what corner of the world he may fall asleep? So let her await me beneath the Amschit palms, in the land of antique mysteries, near the sacred Byblos.

We know not the relations of great souls with the infinite; but if, as everything leads us to believe, consciousness be but a transitory communion with the universe, a communion which leads us more or less directly into the bosom of God,

is it not for souls like hers that immortality is intended? If man have the power to carve out, after a divine model which he does not select, a great moral personality, made up in equal parts of himself and of the ideal, it is surely this that lives with full reality. It is not matter that exists, since a unit is not that; it is not the atom which exists, since that is unconscious. It is the soul which exists, when it has truly made its mark in the eternal history of the true and the good. Who ever fulfilled this high destiny better than did my dear one? Removed just as she attained to the full maturity of her nature, she could never have been more perfect. She had reached the pinnacle of virtuous life; her views in regard to the uni-

verse would not have been carried further ; her measure of devotion and tenderness was running over.

Ah ! but she might have been, — without a doubt she might have been happier. I was dreaming of all sorts of small, sweet rewards for her; I had imagined a thousand foolish fancies to please her taste. I saw her old, respected like a mother, proud of me, resting at last in a peace without alloy. I longed to have her good and noble heart, which never ceased to bleed with tenderness, know a sort of calm — I may say a selfish moment — at last. God willed her to know here none but hard and rough roads. She died almost unrewarded. The hour for reaping what she had sown, for sitting down and looking back

upon past sorrows and fatigues, never struck for her.

To tell the truth, she never thought of reward. That interested view, which often spoils the sacrifices inspired by positive religions, leading us to think that virtue is practised only for the usury to be derived from it, never entered into her great soul. When she lost her religious faith, her faith in duty was not lessened, because that faith was the echo of her inner nobility. Virtue with her was not the fruit of a theory, but the result of an absolute disposition of nature. She did good for its own sake, and not for her own salvation. She loved the beautiful and the true, without any of that calculation which seems to say to God, "Were it not for Thy

hell or Thy paradise, I should not love Thee."

But God does not let His saints see corruption. O heart wherein perpetually burned so sweet a flame of love, — brain, seat of such pure thought, — fair eyes, beaming with kindness, — slender, delicate hand, which I have so often pressed, — I shudder with horror when I think that you are naught but dust. But all here below is but symbol and image. The truly eternal part of each of us is his relation to the infinite. It is in the recollection of God that man is immortal. It is there that our Henrietta lives, forever radiant, forever stainless, — lives a thousand times more truly than when she struggled with her frail organs to

create her spiritual person, and when, cast into the midst of a world incapable of understanding her, she obstinately sought after perfection. May her memory remain with us as a precious argument for those eternal truths which every virtuous life helps to demonstrate. For myself, I have never doubted the reality of the moral order; but I now see plainly that the entire logic of the system of the universe would be overthrown, if such lives were only trickery and delusion.

THE END.

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